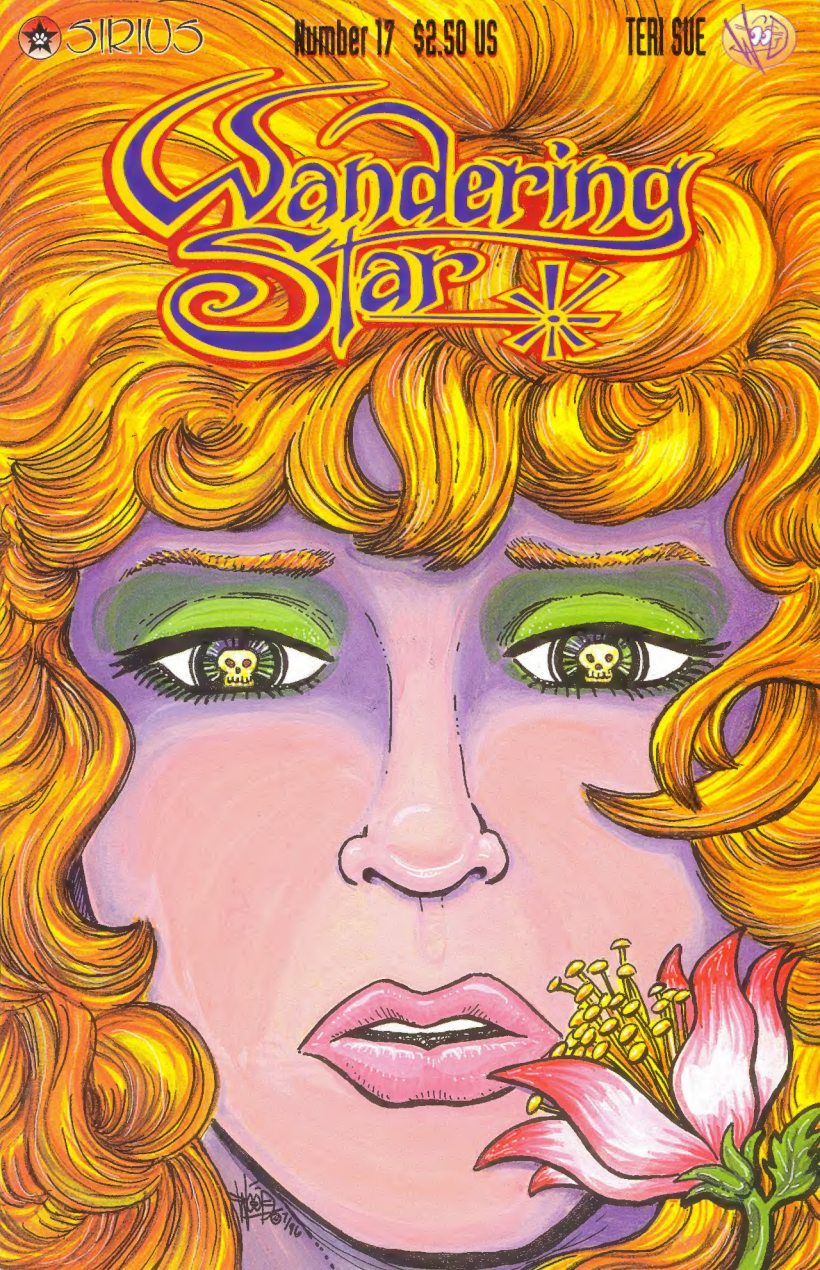
SIRIUS

Number 17 $2.50 US

TERI SUE

Wandering Star

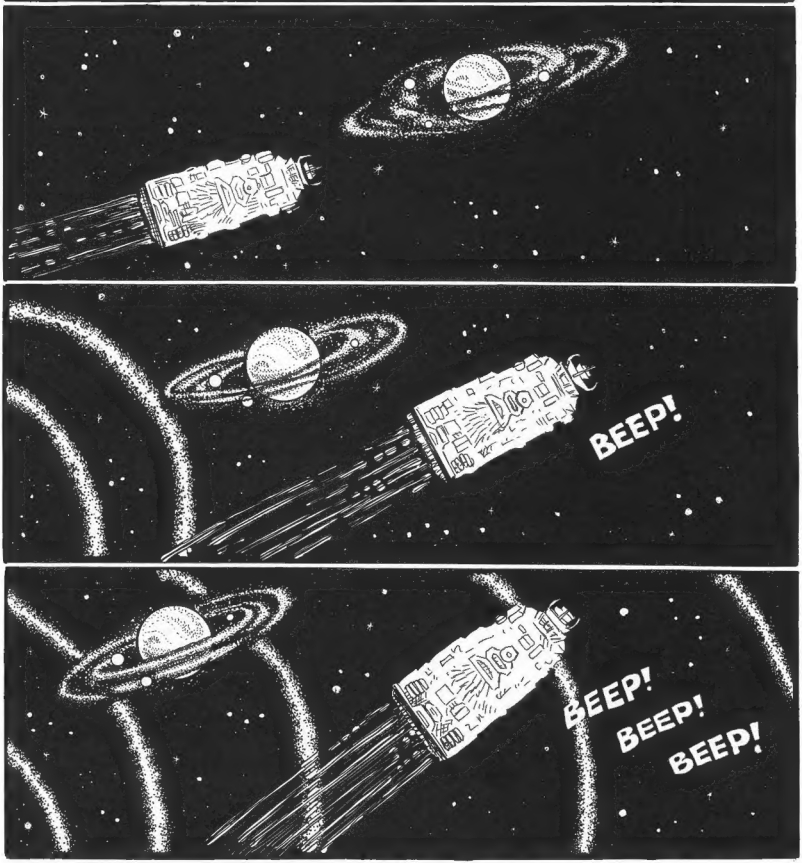


Wandering Star

TERI SUE WOOD CREATOR, WRITER, AND ARTIST • PRESTON A. SWEET PROOF-READER • TRULAWNA FRANSENE VILLALOBOS ARTISTIC ASSISTANT

Yay! Summer's over! And it's about FREAK'N TIME, too! Whoh! Anyway, I've collected a whole buncha firewood and am anxiously awaiting the first really cold night so's I can curl up to a roaring fire and sip a cup of hot coffee. Mm-MMM! Now all's I need is some really nice fellow ta keep me company. Heh. Lah lah lah. What else? Oh hey, guess what? Tru and I went fer a drive yesterday, to explore the mountains to the north of us. We've already checked out the southern ones, and they were very cool. Lotza trees, squirrels, birds and even a lake. Whee! But this time, we wanted to see the other set and off we went. And there we found Oak Glen. Lemme tell ya, it was an absolutely wonderful place. It's this teeni-tiny little town, up in the mountains, with no real streets, just roads winding all over the place, with houses and quaint little markets that jump out at you from the trees when you get close enough. The first thing we saw is this old, stone, two-story school building that they've turned into a museum. We went inside and we walked around a while, peaking in the desks, looking at the displays. Inside of some of the desks were old rulers, and crayons, and a few carved initials, just waiting to be discovered by curious visitors from the present, and you know, you just hav'ta wonder what it must've been like to go to school here. With all those grades together in the same room. Coal in the furnace, warming up the room in the morning. Ink-wells, and hand whittled pen-nibs, and all the rest. Ah, it just charmed me. Further up in the mountains we found a little touristy place, full of shops, bakeries, music and some of the best caramel-apples I've ever had in my life! Whoa-man, they cost three dollars, but boy they were worth it! I think they called the one I picked Almond Roca. Ooo, man! Heaven! And the apple pies, and the apple turn-overs looked good, too, but I didn't try them. Maybe next time. Mm-MMM! As you may have already guessed, yes, they grow apples in Oak Glen. Practically every house had a little apple stand. Some even offered to let you pick your own. Heh. It was a great place. And if it wasn't for the terrible forest-fires that rip through these mountains every single year, I'd be very tempted to move up here when my lease ends in a year and a half. Ah well. With the colder air coming in, the nights have been clearer. Sitting outside I can just make out the lights of Oak Glen, up there in the mountains. Sitting here in the city, with the lights from next door, and the big-ol' security light in the cemetery, and the sounds of the freeway nearby, I wonder what it must be like up there. With all those green growing things, and the sounds of nocturnal animals around you, and the wind rustling in the trees. And the stars which must seem so much brighter in the higher atmosphere. Man! I wanna be up there! Razzer-frazzer-razzer-frazz! Ah well. Anyway, so—did ya vote fer Oliver? Huh? Huh? Did ya? If we win, I'll, like, have a comic con on the White House front lawn and you all can come! Really! Then we'll all go drag out all those Bills and Amendments and whatsits, go through them and figure out where all our tax dollars are going. Maybe even get some white out and rapidograph pens, and re-write a few things. Yeh heh heh! Sounds like a plan to me. Of course, by the time this issue gets out the election will be over. And, most likely, Oliver will have been beaten out by Clinton or Dole. Sigh. Still, I'm optimistic. Hey, in another four years, American should be just frustrated enough with the political system to actually vote a cat into office next election. Yep. So keep those buttons, kids! Well, see ya next issue!

WANDERING STAR Vol. I #17. FIRST PRINTING. Published by SIRIUS Entertainment, Inc. Lawrence Salamone, President. Robb Horan, Publisher. Joseph Linsner, Art Director. Correspondence: P.O. Box 128, Stanhope NJ 07874. WANDERING STAR © 1996 Teri Sue Wood. (Stop reading this! Go read the story!). SIRIUS & the DogStar logo are trademark and copyright SIRIUS Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Any similarity to persons living or dead or temporarily reanimated from the dead is purely coincidental.


BEEP!
BEEP!
BEEP!
BEEP!

KA-CRUNG!

WHAT IN THE NAMES OF THE TWINS!

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

CRUNG!

BELAR!

CHECK YOUR SENSORS! I WANT TO KNOW WHAT THAT WAS!

YES, SIR.

T'KEL! FIND OUT WHAT SORT OF DAMAGE WE TOOK FROM THAT that, THAT,

...WHAT EVER THAT WAS!

YES, SIR.

BELAR!

YOU'RE NOT TALKING TO ME YET!

I'M SORRY, SIR.

BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND THESE READINGS.

What?

LET ME SEE!

what?

shakar et Dhakar....

SIR.

YES,

DAMAGE IS MINIMAL, AND CAN BE REPAIRED ON ROUTE TO THE ALLIANCE.

GOOD.

Sigh.
BELAR, T'KEL, I AM GOING TO MY QUARTERS.
NO ONE BOTHER ME FOR ANYTHING LESS THAN AN EMERGENCY.
I HAVE A REPORT TO PREPARE FOR THE ROYAL COUNCIL...
...THAT WILL HOPEFULLY EXPLAIN THIS MESS.
IT WAS OVER A MONTH BEFORE WE KNEW WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO EARTH.
THE ALLIANCE'S LONG-RANGE SCANNERS HAD REGISTERED SOMETHING,
A "BLIP" ON ALL CHANNELS ORIGINATING FROM THAT AREA OF SPACE
BUT NO ONE HAD ANY CLUE AS TO WHAT HAD HAPPENED UNTIL THEY CAPTURED THE MESSAGE POD.
IT'S COURSE HAD BEEN SET FOR MACHAVIA.
THE ALLIANCE HAD INITIALLY THOUGHT THAT IT WAS A BOMB.

"THERE HAD BEEN A LOT OF THEORIES IN 2104, ABOUT WHAT EXACTLY WEAPON ARMAGEDDON WOULD DO IF IT WAS EVER USED."

"IT HAD AN EXPLOSIVE POWER FAR IN EXCESS OF ANY BOMB PREVIOUSLY CREATED BY MAN, AND IT HAD BEEN PUT ONE-FOURTH OF THE WAY INTO OUR PLANET."

"THEY SAID THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY FRACTURE THE EARTH."

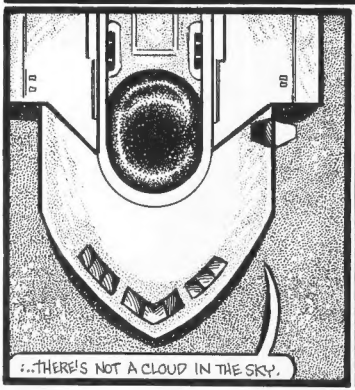
"MAYBE EVEN KNOCK IT SLIGHTLY OUT OF ITS ORBIT AROUND THE SUN, MASSIVELY CHANGING WEATHER PATTERNS WORLD-WIDE.

"AND, PERHAPS,

...IT WOULD EVEN MOMENTARILY HALT THE EARTH'S ROTATION, DISRUPTING GRAVITY, SENDING EVERYTHING ON THE PLANET, INCLUDING THE ATMOSPHERE, SHOOTING OUT INTO SPACE."

"IN THE END, I SUPPOSE, THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING THAT REALLY MATTERED...

"AND THAT IS THAT ON SEPTEMBER 27th, 2149 - OUR TIME - THE PLANET EARTH DIED."



MADISON...
ELLI, DON'T. YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME.
MADISON...
...GO OUTSIDE AND TALK TO CASANDRA.
NO.
MADISON, IT'S BEEN OVER A MONTH.
SHE'S YOUR FRIEND, MADISON.
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, ELLI.
MADI---
CLICK!
HE...
...HE SHUT ME OFF! HE TURNED OFF MY INTERCOM!
WELL, REALLY! THIS HAS GONE ON QUITE LONG ENOUGH!
ELLI?
SWOOOSH!
WHAT?
THAT WAS LOCKED!
SO? I'M THE SHIP.
I CAN DO ANYTHING.

HELLO, MADISON.
GO AWAY, CASANDRA!
I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU.
I DON'T WANT TO SEE ANYONE.
AND YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY RIGHT TO DO THAT, ELLI!
MADISON, LOOK...
...I'M REALLY SORRY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED BACK AT THE HOSPITAL.
CAST, GO AWAY.
YOU CAN ZAP ME, IF YOU WANT.
BUT JUST LISTEN.
I'M NOT GOING TO ZAP YOU.
JUST GO.
MADISON...
... MAYBE... MAYBE YOU NEEDED TO HEAR WHAT I SAID TO YOU.
STOP IT, CASANDRA.
I MEAN, A LOT HAPPENED TO YOU MADISON, AND I WANT TO HELP.
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU?

I DON'T WANT YOUR HELP!
I DON'T WANT YOUR FRIENDSHIP!
I have bad luck with FRIENDS.
THEY DIE!

UM...
...I'M NOT GOING TO DIE, MADISON.

YOU CAN'T MAKE THAT PROMISE, CASANDRA.

Madison.

FINE! I'LL GO!

MADISON!!

DON'T FREAK OUT.
WE'LL FIND HIM.
OKAY.
OUR BEAUTIFUL, CLOUDLESS DAY IS NEARLY OVER, AND STILL NO MADISON.
WE CAN START AGAIN TOMORROW.
GOD, I'M WORRIED ABOUT HIM.
I'M SURE HE'LL BE FINE.
I'M NOT SO SURE.
HEY, CASI. SOMEBODY'S UP THERE.
HEY...
...YOU OKAY?
OH!
UH, YEAH.
IT'S NOTHING
JUST REMINDS ME OF A DREAM I HAD...
OH!
HI, MEKON!
HELLO, CASANDRA.

UM, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN MADISON AROUND, HAVE YOU?
NO, SORRY.
WELL, IT WAS WORTH A SHOT.

BY THE WAY, I'M JOEY
HELLO, JOEY.
OH! SORRY, JOEY.
I'M SORTA OFF IN LAH-LAH LAND.

HEY—I'LL FORGIVE YA IF YA SIT DOWN.
TAKE A LOAD OFF.
I'M BUSHED.

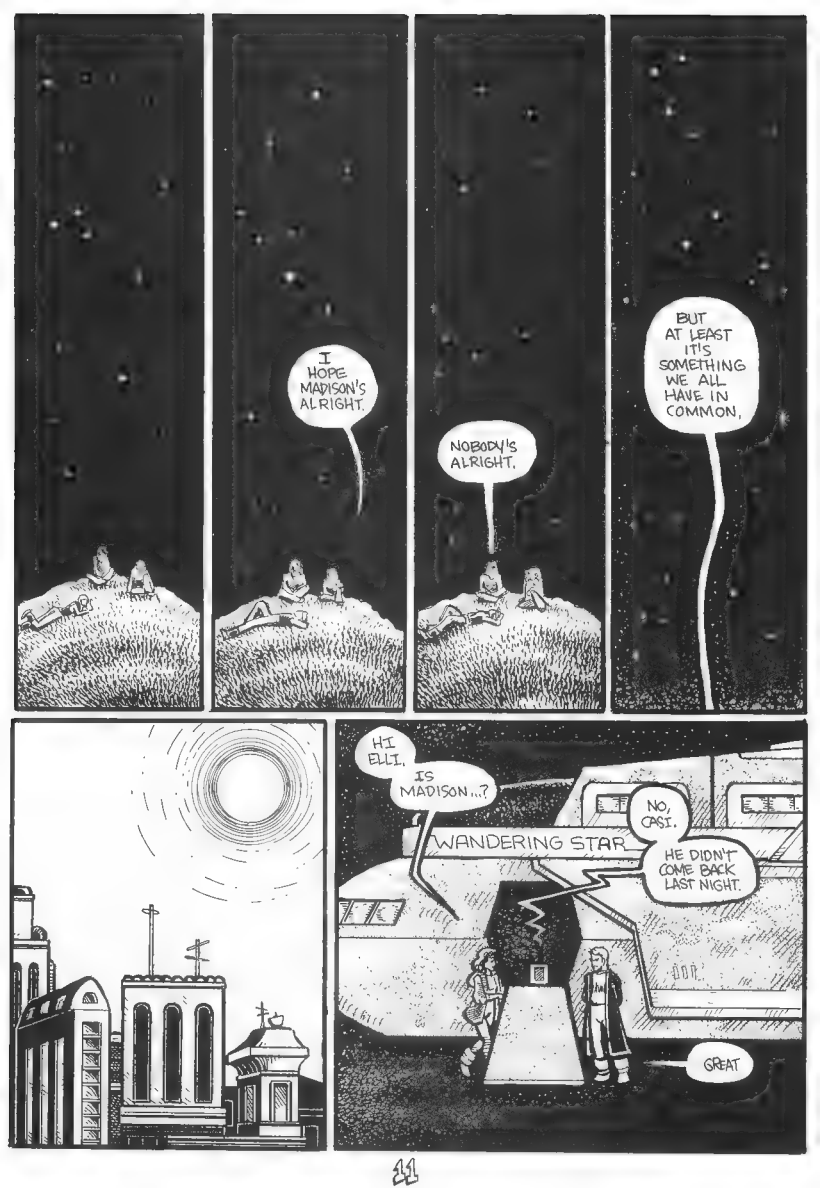
Sigh.
OH, I SUPPOSE SO.

GOD.
JUST LOOK AT ALL THOSE STARS.

SO, HEY, MEKON,
...DO YOU KNOW WHERE MACHAVIA IS UP THERE IN THE SKY?
HM?

UH, YEAH.
SEE THOSE THREE STARS TO THE RIGHT OF THE SMALLEST MOON?
IT'S THE BRIGHTEST ONE.
OH!
YEAH! COOL.

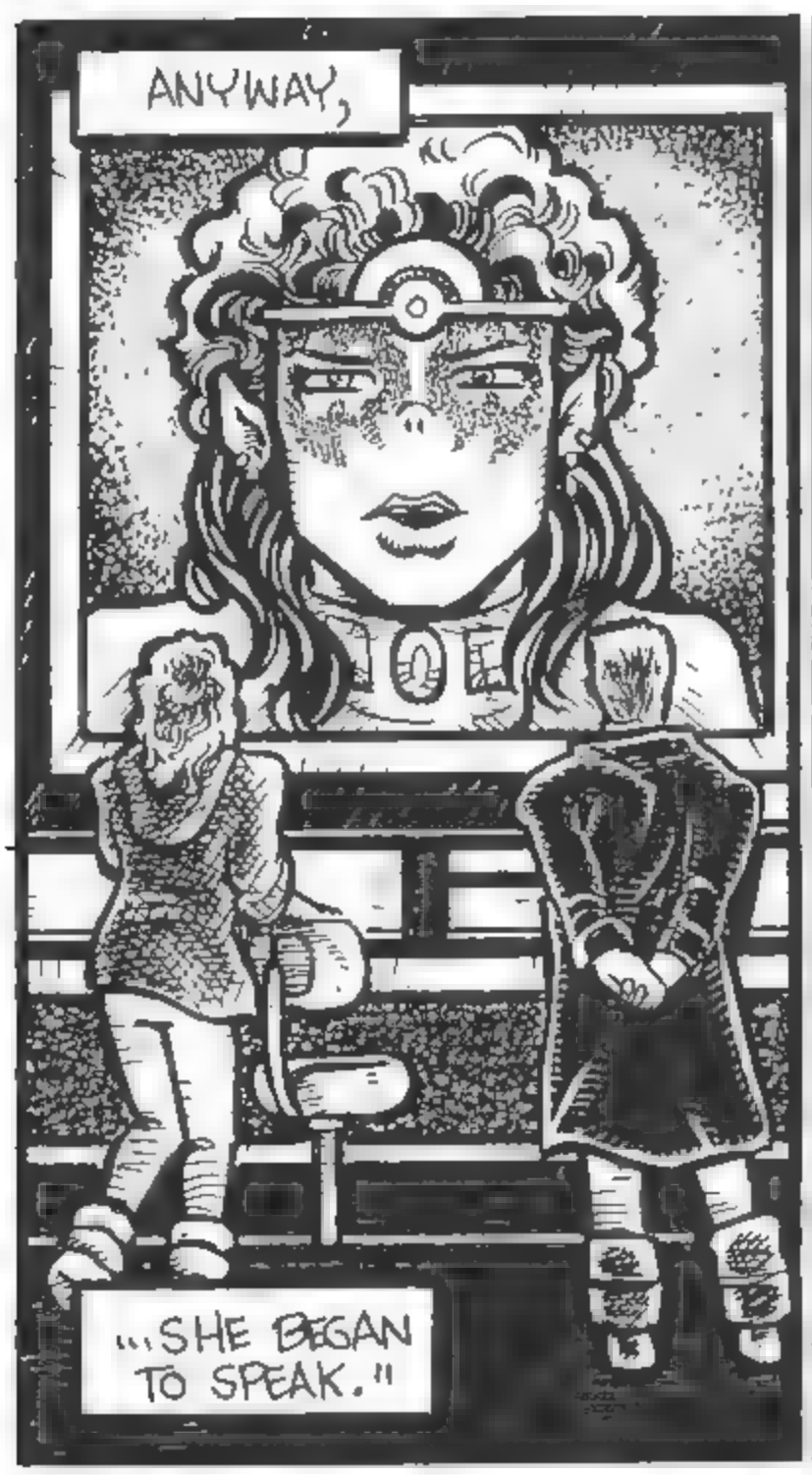
YOU KNOW, MACHAVIA'S SO CLOSE, AND IN SAFE TERRITORY.
WHY DON'T YOU GO HOME? AREN'T YOU HOMESICK?
UH.
NO, I.
YOU SEE...
IF THE WAR ISN'T OVER, I'D... I'D LIKE TO FIGHT.
AND IF I GO HOME, MY FATHER WOULD NEVER ALLOW THAT.
I'M SURPRISED THAT YOUR FATHER DOESN'T COME HERE AND DRAG YOU HOME ANYWAY.
HE'S VERY BUSY.
YOU KNOW?
OUT HERE...
...UNDER THE STARS...
...IT'S EASY JUST TO BE ALIVE.
JUST LIVE.
MAKES YOU WONDER WHY ANYONE WOULD WANT TO DISTURB ALL THIS PEACE WITH WAR, OR ANY OF THOSE OTHER THINGS WE LET OURSELVES GET FLUSTERED ABOUT.


I HOPE MADISON'S ALRIGHT.
NOBODY'S ALRIGHT.
BUT AT LEAST IT'S SOMETHING WE ALL HAVE IN COMMON.
HI ELLI.
IS MADISON...?
WANDERING STAR
NO, CASI.
HE DIDN'T COME BACK LAST NIGHT.
GREAT

AAARRRGH!
GOD! I HATE THIS!
DAWN
HE'S GOING TO DRIVE ME INSANE WORRYING ABOUT HIM!
WELL, DARN IT!
I'M STARVING! I'M GOING TO EAT FOOD FIRST— AND THEN I'LL LOOK FOR HIM - MAYBE.
COOL! WE CAN HAVE SOME OF MY SPECIAL HOT CHOCOLATE!
EXCUSE ME?
OH, SORRY, ELLI.
SLIP OF THE TONGUE.
OUR SPECIAL HOT CHOCO-LATE!
MM-HM.
WEEEEEE
OOP
WEEEEEE
IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?
DAWN
IT WAS.
THE ALLIANCE'S SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT SIGNAL,
...ALERTING EVERYONE TO GO TO THEIR NEAREST VIEWSCREEN.

RIDING ON THE ELEVATOR, HEADING FOR THE WANDERING STAR'S BRIDGE, WE SPECULATED AS TO WHAT THIS COULD MEAN.
THE ALLIANCE ONLY USED THAT SIGNAL FOR EXTREME SITUATIONS.
WAS THE WAR OVER?
HAD THE BONO KIRO WITHDRAWN THE REST OF THEIR TROOPS FROM THE OCCUPIED PLANETS?
WAS IT FINALLY OVER?
WE GOT TO THE BRIDGE,
...JUST AS ELLI TUNED INTO THE CORRECT FREQUENCY.
"THERE WAS THIS MACHANIAN WOMAN ON THE VIEWSCREEN."
KATRILL LA'THASSALLY. THE COUNCIL OF PLANET'S PRESS SECRETARY.
WAS IT?
HMM.
ALL THAT I REMEMBER IS THAT SHE HAD BRIGHTLY PAINTED GREEN LIPS.

FUNNY THE THINGS THAT STICK IN YOUR MIND, HUH?


ANYWAY,
...SHE BEGAN TO SPEAK."

SHE TALKED ABOUT A MYSTERIOUS "BLIP"...
...HEARD ON ALL CHANNELS ORIGINATING FROM THE AREA OF SPACE EARTH'S SOLAR SYSTEM WAS LOCATED.

SHE THEN WENT ON TO TELL US ABOUT A SMALL, COMPUTER-DRIVEN CRAFT, WHOSE COURSE HAD BEEN SET FOR MACHAVIA,
...THAT HAD BEEN CAPTURED TWO DAYS AGO."

IT CONTAINED A PLANETARY HISTORY,
AND A MESSAGE...

...FROM THE EARTH'S PRESIDENT, SAMUAL ANDREWS.

"MY FATHER."

AND... IT SAID THAT THE WEAPON ARMAGEDDON...
...INSTEAD OF BEING DEACTIVATED IN 2109, AS WAS PREVIOUSLY BELIEVED...
NO.
...HAD BEEN SECRETLY KEPT ACTIVE ALL THESE YEARS...
...AND NOW, IT HAD BEEN USED.
A STRANGE "WHOOSH" OF COLDNESS SWEPT DOWN MY SPIN INTO MY FEET.
AND I JUST STOOD THERE, STARING UP AT THE SCREEN.
THE WOMAN, LA'THASSALY, WAS STILL SPEAKING.

I COULD SEE HER LIPS MOVING,

...BUT THE SOUND OF HER WORDS, ALONG WITH THEIR MEANING, WAS LOST IN THE BUZZING IN MY EARS.

THEN... SOMETHING FLIPPED A SWITCH IN MY BRAIN AND SUDDENLY ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS HOT CHOCOLATE."

What?

Hot Chocolate.

I TURNED AND WALKED STRAIGHT TOWARD THE PROCESSOR AT THE BACK OF THE BRIDGE,

...AND STARTED PUNCHING IN THE CODES FOR TWO CUPS OF HOT CHOCOLATE, AND ONE ORDER OF BUTTERED TOAST.

BIP BOP BEEP

BEEP

CASANDRA?

HERE'S YOUR HOT CHOCOLATE, JOEY.

Huh?

CASANDRA!

YOU KNOW, ELLI?

I NEVER SEEM TO GET ENOUGH BUTTER ON MY TOAST.

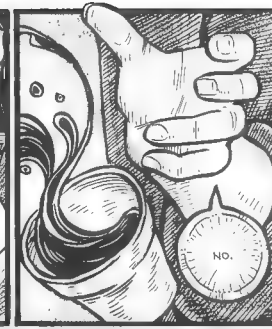
I'VE TRIED TO SPECIAL ORDER IT, BUT I STILL DON'T GET THE EXTRA BUTTER.

IT'S DRIVING ME CRAZY.

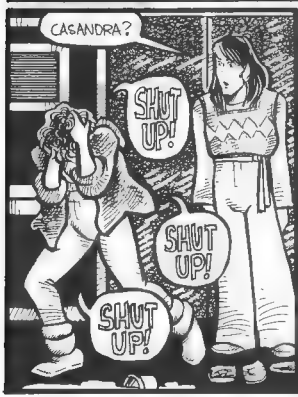
SWOOOSH!
MEKON?
UH, HI, ELLI.
WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
CASI, I...
...UH,
...I JUST HEARD!
CAN I...? UM, ARE YOU?
HM?
OH, HI, MEKON.!
WANT SOME HOT CHOCOLATE?
IT'S SAFE FOR MACHAVIANS.
What?!!
HOT CHOCOLATE!
OH, HERE! Have mine.
I'LL GET SOME MORE
I...
...I...
...I..?
ELLI!
DIDN'T YOU ALL HEAR?!
BEEP BIP BIP BOP
WE DID, MEKON.
BUT, I...
...I THINK SHE'S IN SHOCK.
HMM-MMM.

CASI?

COME SIT DOWN.

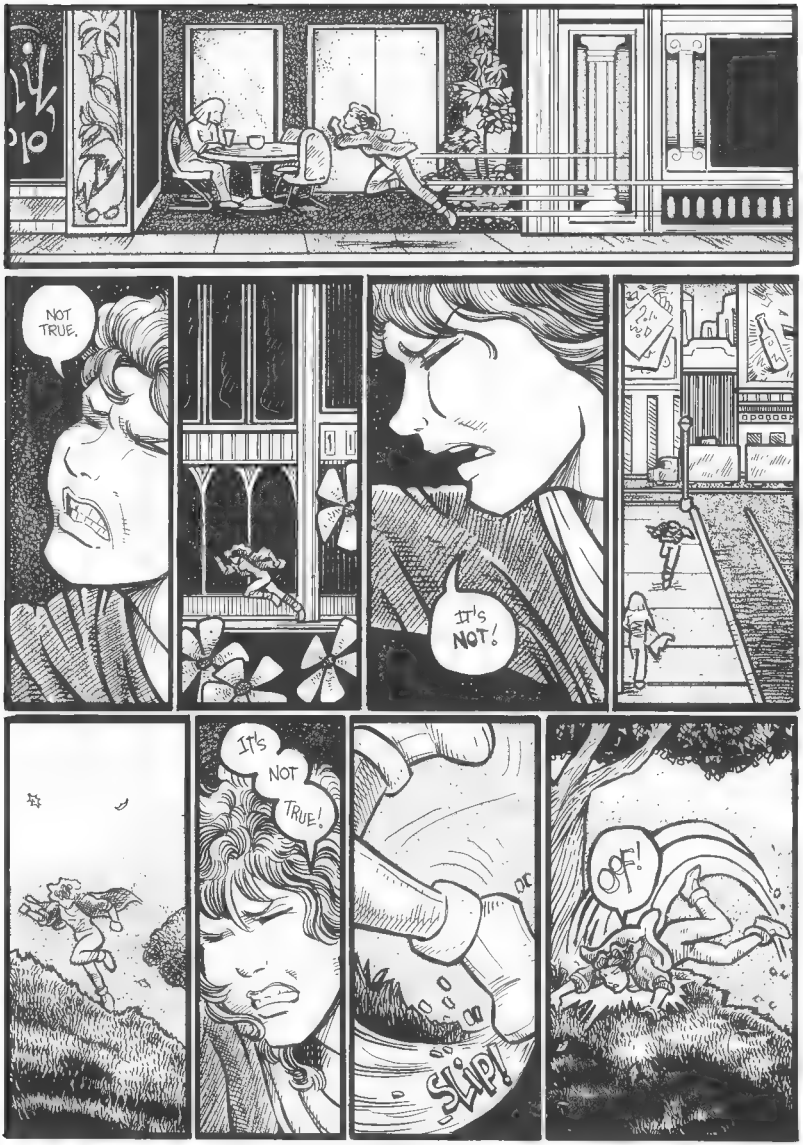

NO.

IT'S NOT TRUE!
GODS!
OH DEAR!

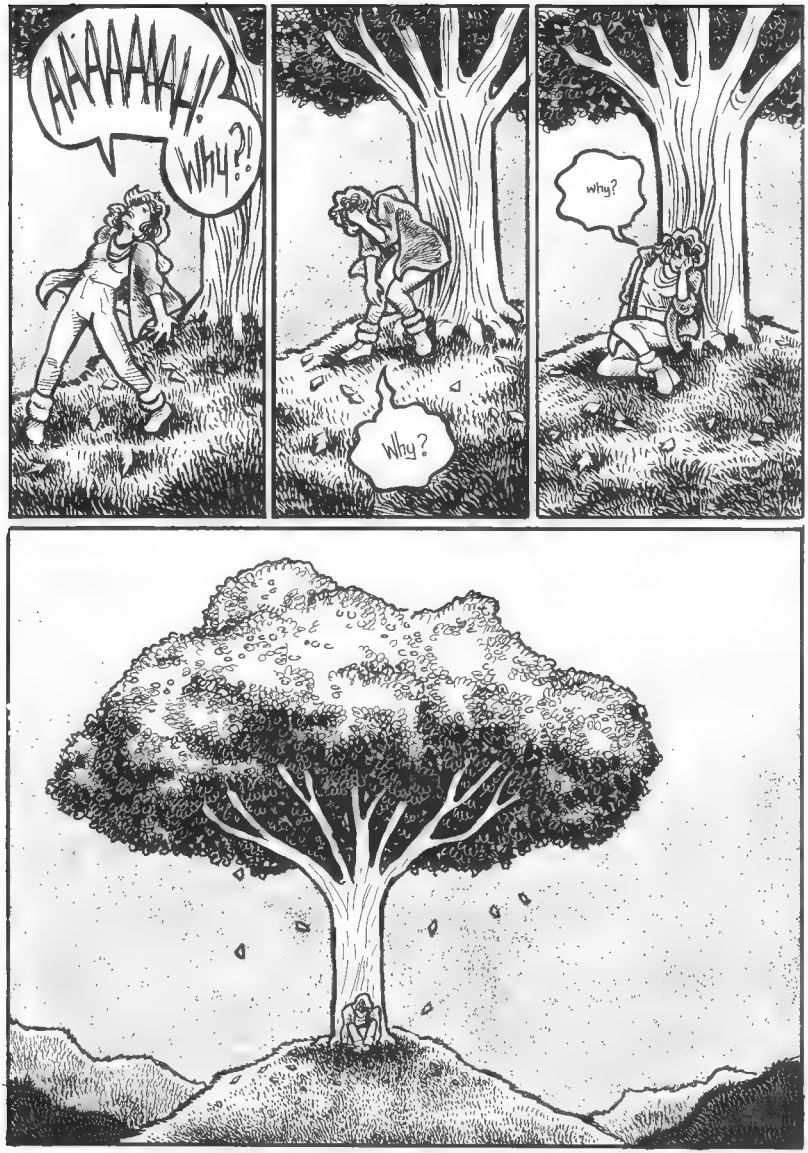

CASANDRA?
SHUT UP!
SHUT UP!
SHUT UP!

IT'S NOT TRUE!

CASI!
WOOOSH!
NOT TRUE.


NOT TRUE.
IT'S NOT!
IT'S NOT TRUE!
SLIP!
OOF!

IT'S NOT TRUE.
It's not.
oh, God.
Please!
I Can't...
I Couldn't...
oh, Please.
God?
NO!
THERE IS NO GOD!
DO YOU HEAR ME?
HOW COULD YOU EXIST AND LET THIS HAPPEN? HOW COULD YOU EXIST AND NOT DO ANYTHING?
Why?


AAAAAAAH!
Why?!
Why?
why?

WANDERING THOUGHTS

PO BOX 474, BEAUMONT CA 92223-0474

Dear Teri,

Wanderful! Starpendous! Mere (made-up) words can't convey how much I enjoy WANDERING STAR! Okay, I take that back. They have to, otherwise what's the point of writing you? (grin) Where to start...? How `bout the middle, since that's were I've come into WS? First off: WHAT IN THE BLUDDY BLUE BLAZES IS GOING ON HERE??????? There, I'm glad I've gotten that off my chest. Ya see, I have issues #8, 9 and 14. Period. Believe me, the gaps are NOT intentional! I have been ordering everything you have solicited through DIAMOND (since issue #8). And my dealer has been ordering (and back-ordering) everything I've wanted. Unfortunately, it seems that DIAMOND doesn't feel that the small amount of independent comics he orders for myself and a few others are important. At least not important enough to see to it that they are actually shipped to him! I seem to get about every other issue of any indie I order (if I'm lucky!). For a book like WANDERING STAR, it's frustrating as hell, because if you can't get it when it first comes out, you're in for a loooooong search in the back-issue bins. But when you do find it, the price ain't bad, `bout cover. For a book like STRANGERS IN PARADISE (which I heartily recommend), you can find back issues easily enough, but the prices! Gleep! I couldn't get the trade paperback, or ANY of the back issues that were "Offered Again"! (whine) Well, maybe now that you've joined up with a semi-large publisher, DIAMOND will start taking WS "siriusly"! (ahem) Speaking of which... Now that you ARE with a larger company, what are the chances of there being an UNLIMITED edition trade paperback? Unless you have some back issues (including #1) that you want to sell... (hint, hint). Though I normally prefer trade paperbacks when I'm missing such a large number of issues, with WS I would rather have the individual issues because, frankly, I LOVE to read your editorials! I love the way you write, it's almost a stream-of-consciousness type thing. If you're writing and you remember something, you're like, "Oh, yeah! Before I forget..." (or at least you PRETEND that you do!) S'cool. Now let's see... Where did I first see your work...? All I remember is reading a comic strip somewhere with this "WooD" with eyes and a mouth flying around. Was that in the Comic Buyer's Guide? Anyway, when I found out that this person had a real, live, comic, comic BOOK... BWAH HAH HAH HAH HAH!!! MINE! ALL MINE! YAH HAH HAH HAH HAH!!! (Weird letters you want, weird letters you get...) Distributors not withstanding, I've enjoyed what issues I have. Now for a standard bit in the letters I write... THE REVIEW! Overall, your style reminds me a lot of the way Fred (GOLD DIGGER) Perry does his book. During high dramatic or action sequences, the standard square-paneled page goes "bye-bye." Book eight, page 19 is a prime example of this. Also, like Fred, you do your own lettering. That lets you put just the right emphasis on the words. The above example also follows this. Don't change a thing! (Also, if you haven't already, check out GOLD DIGGER! It's put out by ANTARCTIC PRESS. It is awesome!!!) As for the storyline itself... I dunno yet! I like what I've read so far, but that's only 20 percent of what's been written! (sigh) As for the art... well, hey, what CAN I say?

(pause) (long pause)

(even longer pause)

All right, all right! Stop looking at me that way! I'll tell ya! Geez! The first word that comes to mind was, "simplistic." (BUZZZ) Wrong answer!

Actually, your figure art is very detailed (especially your inking! Wow!), but it's so clean that the eyes kind of slide right over the art, and you get the feeling that since it's so easy to look at, that it's "simplistic." (That's what comes from reading all of those IMAGE comics, where you can count every tooth and cavity in a person's mouth!) Now, I WILL admit that your rendition of inanimate objects is really not that detailed. But, like in STAR TREK, the ships and stuff are just there for the characters to stand on and play with. It's the interaction between the characters that drives the story, not their toys. Let's see what little bits of info I've been able to garner about the story and the characters so far... Story: the war has already taken place in the past and Casandra's survived, so we aren't worried about HER dying, but her FRIENDS... It seems like she's being... I don't know... interviewed (?) by this Aldar person. (Duh, dude. What was your first indication?) I get the feeling that the "good guys" won, but that the cost was astronomical. Beyond that, I'm floating. I don't know WHAT the heck is going on. Characters:

(This first is more a question than a conclusion) The Wandering Star/Elli... Casi referred to Elli as a Trillion, but Elli refers to herself as the SHIP (???). Is the ship alive, or Elli a lifeform that is in symbiosis with the ship (shades of THE SHIP WHO SANG by Anne McCaffrey!) Either way, why in #14 does Mekon have to pilot the WANDERING STAR? Does Elli control some, but not all of the ship functions? Madison is a mentat of some sort. That much is obvious from him trying to "blast" the borders in book eight. He also seems to have healing abilities of some sort, since Cas wanted him brought to her in #14. (Why "Number 14"? Why not "Book Fourteen"?) I also saw what looked like implants on each temple. Were they from something the Bono Kiro did or are they connections for his helmet? (Something like Geordi's VISOR on STAR TREK?) Graikor... (shrug) He was a really, REALLY big humanoid bunny rabbit? (grin) Narz... (grrr) Why is it, that there's never a Wave-Motion Cannon around when you really need it? Time for some misc. ramblings.

***WARNING!

Blatant Plug Zone Ahead!***

Back in Book Nine, you recommended an ashcan called FINDER by Carla Speed McNeil. I have yet to read it, though it has been recommended to me by other people, but I can tell you what Carla is working on right now. She is one of the artists (alternating with Michelle Light) working on Mike Curtis' SHANDA THE PANDA! (You'd love it! There's a character in it named Terri! Okay, so she's a cricket. So what?) I just had to plug SHANDA (it's in my contract) because thanks to Mike, I am now one of the few, the proud, the PUBLISHED COMIC BOOK WRITERS!!! Yay! I've got two stories in the GIANT SHANDA ANIMAL (ANNUAL) #1 with art by my main man, Phil Bolton, another one (a backup) will be in issue #17 of SHANDA, again with art by Phil, with more on the way! I also have to plug KATMANDU, which is written by Carole Curtis (Mike's wife) with art (for now) by Terrie Smith! Both SHANDA and KAT are being published by VISION COMICS. Try `em! You'll like `em! *END BLATANT

PLUG ZONE. We now return you to your abnormal letter.* I was talking with a friend of mine, Robert Teague, at Dragon*Con (and just when, young lady, are you going to attend?), and he was telling me about some of the SHANDA backup stories he was working on with Carla. We were also talking about how hard, financially, being a self-publisher can be. He said something that I've been saying for a year or so now. he said that if he ever won the Georgia Lottery, the future of SHANDA FANTASY ARTS (Mike's self-publishing company) would be assured. All I could do was nod my head vigorously in agreement. Though my list of self-publishers who would receive a big, fat, yearly check from me was a little larger:
Mike (SHANDA THE PANDA) Curtis Terry (STRANGERS IN PARADISE) Moore Colleen (A DISTANT SOIL) Doran and last, but not least Teri Sue (WANDERING STAR) Wood.

Now, do you notice anything interesting about three out of four of those names? (insert Jeopardy music) That's right! Terry, Colleen, and thee have stopped self-publishing and joined up with the Big(ger) Guys! I guess this means I'll win the lotto sometime in the next couple of months, since ya'll don't need the money anymore! (Hah!) Yeah, I know Mike and Carole are being published by VISION, but they do furry comics, and, sadly, there's not much mainstream interest in such books. That means itty-bitty, little print runs! Besides, I owe him for getting me interested enough in his characters to want to write stories about them! Thanks to him, the writing bug has bitten me and I *NEVER* want to be cured!! In #14, Christopher J. Tully made the point that I, and I'm sure bookoo others, are wondering about. In just the past couple months, all these big-name self-publishers have bailed out and gone to the Big(ger) Guys. (Seems like the only one left is Dave Sim.) That makes it seem like self-publishing is dead, since all these well-known people have thrown in the self-publishing towel. But in your reply, you hit the head on the nail (or something like that...), when you said that it's just waiting for the next wave. Everything goes in cycles. Out with the old, in with the new! One quick look through the new issues of Previews will tell you that self-publishing is nowhere near dead! Here's

One of the infamous CARTOONIST strips I did for AMAZING HEROES. (Now ya know where I got the funky signature.)

some suggestions for guest cover artists: Carla Speed McNeil (Trust me, her art's gotten even better!) Joseph Michael Linsner (And you thought DREW HAYES was bad?!) Dark One (Hey ya gotta get that SIRIUS crossover thing going!) Terry Moore (Why? Because we like him!)

Fred Perry (Check out GOLD DIGGER, NOW!) I've got others, but most are either furry or Manga-style artists. (Like Fred Perry) Terrie Smith can draw excellent non-furries when she has to. And Adam (DIRTY PAIR) Warren draws excellent, period! What is STARCHILD, and who does it, and who publishes it? I'm wondering because I've seen posters of it in the background of WS (Book Nine, last page). Who the hay is Tru? Does MAIN STREET COMICS do mail-order? Even though Athens is just a hop, skip, and a jump away, I doubt I'll get over there anytime soon. In the past two years, I've been out of this town TWICE.. Why do you have all those missing children files on the back of your book? I ain't complaining. I'm just wondering. I haven't the faintest idea how to roast chestnuts over an open fire. Sorry. Heck, even my MOTHER doesn't know! (And I thought she knew everything!) Does you being with a "SIRIUS" publisher mean we won't see anymore of those neat little page fillers like "Thermometer Boogie" in Book Eight and "Oregon Bound!" in Book Nine? Say it ain't so! This letter has gotten entirely too long (as is normal for me), so that's all for now! Thanks! Later! Peace,

John F. Martin
Resaca, GA

Ookay, let's see. Hopefully me being at SIRIUS will help ya find those back-issues, John. I believe SIRIUS re-solicited all of them recently. `Course that plan was made just prior to the DIAMOND EATS CAPITAL saga, so as of this writing, I'm unsure if the plan went though. But, I do know that SIRIUS plans on releasing the new trades (probably three of them, seven issues each, now that I'm at 21 issues), just as soon as the series concludes early next year. Until then, any back issue that ya can't get from yer friendly neighborhood comic dealer, you can get from COSMIC THERAPY, P.O. Box 1309, Andover, NJ 07821, (201) 347-6634. 1-14 are $2.50 each. P&H is $5 for the first five items, and $1 for each additional item. Hope that helps.

Ah HAH! So you remember my evil little comic strip, do ya? Gawd, that was a fun job, me terrorizing the comic industry from, what was it? 1989 to `91? Yep, them was the good old days. Sigh. The strip was called THE CARTOONIST, and though there were a few that appeared in the COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE, its official home was in FANTAGRAPHICS' magazine, AMAZING HEROES. It's still a bit weird to me when I discover how many of the people that read WANDERING STAR never heard of the strip. It used to be the only thing anybody knew me by. Weird. (Cha-cha-cha-cha-CHANGES). Is Elli the ship or just in the ship? Well, hey, if Elli says she's the ship, she is. Heck, I'm not gonna argue with her. (Actually, she's an energy being that plays around in the ship's computer. She can run a lot of things in the ship, but not everything all at once.) WHAAAT? Was Graikor "a really, REALLY big humanoid bunny rabbit?" Hmp! Just shut up, ya meanie! Let's see, what else. Oh! STARCHILD is a self-published comic by James Owens and TALESIN PRESS (I'm probably spelling that wrong), now COPPERVALE PRESS. It's a cool book. Check it out. Does Preston do mail-order? Well, I asked Preston if he wanted me to tell you guys if he did, and he said, "Oooh, NOOOO! Please! NOOOOO!" I guess he's been reading my letter pages, which of course means he knows how completely wacko you all are, and he's afraid. You'll have to forgive him. He's still quite normal, even for a comic fan, shop-owner. Why missing children? Well, basically, it just boiled down to that it seemed like a good thing to do. And OF COURSE I'm still gonna do weird stuff in my book! How could I not? Please! But even so, there will be a bit less. It's harder to think of interesting, twisted stuff around a monthly deadline (it's a lot of work just getting the book done on time sometimes!!! Wholf!), but if something horrible pops into my head, have no fear—I will share it with ya. That reminds me of something I wanted to mention. A friend of mine, Michael Cohen (he does the OTHER sci-fi comic, STRANGE ATTRACTORS. Cool book.) was under the impression for the longest time that my monthly deadline was imposed on me by the gang at SIRIUS. Naaah, I had the option to go bi-monthly, but I wanted to try the monthly schedule for a couple of reasons. One: because it's easier to keep track of a storyline if it's out each and every month, and two: Darklight's a long story and I'd like to finish it before I'm ninety, so, like, I can tell ya a few other stories, ya know? Ah, I'm forgetting stuff (boy, are these answers out of order.), let's see. The implants in Madison's head. Yes, it's like Geordi in STAR TREK. I used to be a big `ol STAR TREK fan. Now'a'days it's BABYLON 5. Which is on tonight! Whee! Yes, I've seen SHANDA THE PANDA. And yes again, it is a cool book. If ya win the lottery, you can still send me a check if ya really want to. And I know what you're talking about. I've said it myself quite a few times that if I ever won the California lotto I'd be paying off the printing bills for a lot of my friends. (A new book added to MY wish-I-could-help list is TALES FROM THE BOG by Marcus Lusk and ABERRATION PRESS: $2.95 plus $1 P&H, 416 Cahaba Park Circle, Suite 107-B, Birmingham, AL 35242. It's very cool. And there's three issues out. Go grab `em!) Sigh, yes, I know. My drawings of inanimate objects suck. But I'm getting better. Well, I'm trying to. Razzer-frazzer-razzer-frazz! You guys STILL want a SIRIUS cover cross-over? Well, I vote we forget this cover stuff and go for whole book cross-overs! Yeah, Drew Hayes and Mark Crilley could draw each others' book one month. And me and Dark One could switch, too. Yeh heh heh! So, what `da `ya think? Huh? Huh? (Um, maybe I better shut up before I get you all going, `cuz this could get me into some SIRIUS trouble with Drew, Mark and D.1. Yep. Now, I know trouble does make life interesting, but it's been quite interesting enough for one year, thank you.) Last but not least, who's Tru? Actually, Tru was found wandering in the desert by El Centro, my old home town, many years back. The rumor was that she had been raised by coyotes. She drooled a lot, and ate bugs, but with help of the kind old lady who found her, she's slowly learned to get by in society. Granted, she still snarls and snaps at the mailman, but she's turned out to be a very good friend. (Well, at least until she sees this.) And that's everything this ish, kids!

See yaz!

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

WS #1 (First Printing): Blue stars on front. Missing children page on back has photo on bottom. WS #1 (Second Printing): Light purple stars. Missing children page on back has photo on top. Also, all copies have a hand-stamped date on the inside front cover, at the end of the editorial. The date varies. It was supposed to be the date I got them in, but I was using that date-stamp for my invoices and stuff as well, so... WS #1 (Third Printing): Light purple stars. Missing children photo still on top, and no hand-stamped date. There was no way I was going to do this another 3,000 times. Arrrgh!!

Missing Children
Help Center
National Missing Children Division
National Child Safety Council
410 Ware Boulevard, Suite 400
Tampa, Florida 33619

ROBIN F. MURPHY

Missing

ROBIN F. MURPHY

Missing:	04/09/95	**Age Now:**	18 yrs 8 mths
Missing From:	CARMEL, NEW YORK	**Age Disap.:**	17
Birth:	01/11/78	**Race:**	White
Sex:	Female	**Eyes:**	Blue
Height:	5' 9"	**Weight:**	140 lbs.
Hair:	N/A Black		

ID Info: NCIC#M-823035336. LAST SEEN WEARING BLACK JEANS, BLACK & WHITE PLAID SHIRT & BLACK BOOTS.

Circum: ROBIN WAS LAST SEEN AT 7:30 PM AT THE SHOPRITE PLAZA, ROUTE 52, CARMEL, NEW YORK ON APRIL 9, 1995.

ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT:

Missing Children...HELP Center at 1-800-USA-KIDS

OR

TOWN OF CARMEL POLICE DEPT.
60 MC ALPIN AVE TOM BUDINGTON
MAHOPAC, NY 10541 (914) 628-1300

Missing Children
Help Center
National Missing Children Division
National Child Safety Council
410 Ware Boulevard, Suite 400
Tampa, Florida 33619

ANDREA LYNN WIDMARK

Missing/Endangered

ANDREA LYNN WIDMARK

Missing:	03/15/96	**Age Now:**	15 yrs 7 mths
Missing From:	MORENO VALLEY, CA	**Age Disap.:**	15
Birth:	02/12/81	**Race:**	White
Sex:	Female	**Eyes:**	Green
Height:	5' 5"	**Weight:**	105 lbs.
Hair:	Straight Brown		

ID Info: NCIC NO. M-918290896

Circum: BELIEVED TO BE WITH A WHITE MALE IN HIS 30'S. ON AUGUST 19, PARENTS RECEIVED A CALL FROM ANDREA ON THEIR ANSWERING MACHINE PLEADING FOR HELP.THEY HAVE NOT HEARD FROM HER SINCE.

ANYONE HAVING INFORMATION SHOULD CONTACT:

Missing Children...HELP Center at 1-800-USA-KIDS

OR

MORENO VALLEY POLICE DEPARTMENT
MORENO VALLEY, CA 92552 (909) 697-8311

ROEL
SIRIUS
ROEL IS COMING IN FEBRUARY